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Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Modalities, format and organization of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/59/L.53

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/59/25), in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, on the programme budget implications of paragraphs 1 to 6 and 8 of draft resolution A/59/L.53.

2. The overall resource requirements related to the implementation of the draft resolution amount to $1,727,800, as detailed in paragraphs 3 to 12 of the Secretary-General's statement. However, for the reasons given in paragraphs 11 and 12 of his statement, additional resource requirements related to the activities provided for under the terms of the draft resolution are estimated at $1,060,700 (at 2004-2005 rates) under the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

3. **The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the statement of programme budget implications should have provided a better analysis of resource requirements and, in terms of existing capacity, of possibilities for absorption and redeployment. For example, the Committee questions why only $350,000 out of $777,100 for public information activities was reported as subject to absorption; the Committee notes that the budget of the Department of Public Information for 2004-2005 amounts to approximately $156.0 million**

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and was informed that so far some $77.0 million had been allotted and some $66.0 million had been committed during 2004. The Committee points out that for an event as important as the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, the Secretariat should make a greater effort to reorder priorities so as to accommodate these activities from within existing resources.

4. Further, the Advisory Committee points out that the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications gives no indication of potential savings under section 9 of the programme budget for 2004-2005 for travel of staff resulting from the fact that the substantive secretariat of the Economic and Social Council would not have to travel to Geneva, even taking into account the need for certain staff to travel to New York from Geneva and the regional commissions.

5. In addition to the foregoing, the Advisory Committee has identified a number of areas where economies should be possible, including general temporary assistance where, for example, the Committee is of the opinion that the nine months of general temporary assistance at the P-2 level requested for a project assistant could be met from within existing resources. Additionally, the resources requested for protocol should also be given a second look in view of the short duration of the Meeting and the nature of that function. Savings should also be possible for overtime, travel of staff, rental of equipment and publication costs. The Committee is furthermore of the opinion that a greater effort should be made to utilize in-house capacity in language services, even given the calendar of conferences at the time the High-level Meeting is foreseen.

6. Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee recommends that every effort be made to absorb the requested amount. Such additional resource requirements as may be necessary can be reflected in the second performance report for the biennium 2004-2005. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/59/L.53, no additional appropriation would arise at this time, pending submission of the second performance report.